

# Transforming the Best Army in the World

Story by MG Joseph M. Cosumano Jr.

*With this issue **Soldiers** takes a first look at the Army's efforts to transform itself into a more lethal and responsive force while maintaining its ability to meet today's challenges. For a more in-depth look at the Army's transformation process, see the April issue of **Soldiers** and the March/April issue of the Army AL&T Journal (formerly RD&A Journal).*

**T**HE Army is changing. It will not be the Army of your father, or even the Army you used to know. When the planned transformation is completed, the Army will be a more responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable and sustainable force capable of responding to missions across the full spectrum of conflict.

The objective of this transformation is to erase the distinction between heavy and light forces. It will make light forces more lethal, survivable and tactically mobile, and heavy forces more strategically deployable and agile with a reduced logistics tail.

## Why This Army, Why Now?

Our world has changed, mandating that the Army change too. While the Army remains unchallenged in major



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theater-war operations, our forces are too heavy to rapidly respond to small-scale contingency operations. Transforming the Army into a force capable of dominating across the full spectrum of operations is not an option; it is a requirement.

**The German-built Fuchs — seen here during demonstrations at Fort Knox, Ky. — may become part of the transformed Army.**

Army Chief of Staff GEN Eric K. Shinseki said: "The spectrum of likely operations describes a need for land forces in joint, combined and multina-

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tional formations for a variety of missions extending from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to peacekeeping and peacemaking to major theater wars, including conflicts involving the potential use of weapons of mass destruction.” The time to transform the Army is now.

A window of opportunity has opened during this period of diminished threat that allows us to drive the transformation process. We can design, test, field, train and shape the transformation force. The objective force must have the same lethality and survivability of the heavy force it will displace, but the agility and transportability found in the light forces.

## Increased Missions, New Threats and Major Theater Wars

Today we have a very complicated threat mix that requires a capabilities-based force instead of a threat-based force. Previously our military was focused on a single adversary — the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Today we must have the capability to respond to a host of different threats and missions. Instead of having a force that reacts, we need a force that shapes.

The Army is increasingly called upon to conduct worldwide deterrence, direct action, or maintain stability and support operations. Over the past seven years the Army has been involved in more missions than in the previous 40 years. Those actions number almost 30 and include a range of missions: from Kosovo, Bosnia and Hurricane Andrew, to fighting fires and assisting in flood-damaged areas.

The Army’s charter has not changed. The secretary of the Army and the chief of staff have articulated a clear Army vision, which appears in the preceding article.

We must still build and support a force that is capable of fighting and winning two nearly simultaneous major-theater wars. The United States



will remain engaged internationally, retaining its leadership in multinational defense arrangements and in promoting democratic values, free markets and human rights. The future, however, will be even more complex, uncertain and challenging than today.

To meet operational requirements the Army must move to a lighter, more

strategically mobile force, one capable of deploying a brigade by C-130 to a contingency area in 96 hours that will be fully prepared to conduct its mission. We must also have a trained and ready force that can deploy one division anywhere in the world in 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days. Our current equipment and force





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**The new interim brigades will give infantrymen better protection, while also making them far more mobile.**

ability to conduct the war. At the same time we will convert the current force to a strategically responsive one. We will continue to modernize and upgrade III Corps, our counterattack corps, and XVIII Airborne Corps, our contingency corps, as a hedge to fight our nation's wars. This is our legacy force.

Simultaneously, we will begin investing in industry and technologies to create the objective force. We will transform the Army from its current Cold War organization and equipment into a force that better utilizes its full-spectrum capabilities in a more strategically deployable force.

The newly organized force will be built around a common unit design and common family of combat systems that is C-130 deployable. When complete, we will have developed the objective system that is deployable and enjoys the combat dominance and survivability of the combat systems of today.

This is not a warfighting experiment! The transformation begins immediately. It will consist of a three-step process leading to the objective force. There will be an initial, interim and, finally, an objective force.

The initial force is two brigades that will stand up at Fort Lewis, Wash., with currently available equipment to evaluate and refine the operations and organization concept. At the same time we are beginning the process to acquire vehicles in the 20- to 25-ton weight class to outfit the interim brigades. These will be off-the-shelf vehicles.

Our intent is to field common equipment, across common organizations that operate across the full spectrum of operations. Potential

missions include deploying to prevent, contain, stabilize or terminate crises, deploying in stability-and-support operations to guarantee peace and protect forces, or deploying to major-theater wars to fight as part of the division.

The near-term goal is to provide the interim brigades the necessary mobility, protection, firepower and capacity to fight, survive and conduct operations as part of a combined arms team. That team must be strategically deployable by C-130.

In the far term the future combat system will provide a common baseline capability for a mounted tactical force to engage in direct combat, deliver line-of-sight or near-line-of-sight munitions, perform reconnaissance, and transport soldiers and materiel.

With minimum modification, these vehicles will be capable of performing numerous tasks. These tasks include mobility and countermobility; conducting maintenance, recovery and resupply operations; supporting medical-specific operations; protecting the force from air and missile threats; and providing command-and-control functions to the force while on the move. Multifunctional/multirole capabilities will minimize variants and maximize the benefits of vehicle commonality.

The objective force is the endstate of our transformation. It is a future force — a common design applied to the entire Army that achieves the force characteristics as outlined in the Army vision. Once complete, the objective force increases the Army's responsiveness, lethality and endurance, providing the ability to dominate any threat in any environment.

The transformation of the Army will not occur overnight, but it is necessary if we are to remain the world's premier land force. □



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**A thorough evaluation of proposed interim vehicles will ensure that the transformed Army will be both mobile and lethal.**

structure will not allow us to meet those standards.

The transformation strategy is designed to ensure we achieve the vision while still maintaining the